

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 170818Z APR 75

FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2146

INFO USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

S E C R E T GENEVA 2661

EXDIS

NO FOREIGN DISSEM

DEPARTMENT PASS TO SECDEF

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CSCE, PARM, PFOR, XG

SUBJECT: CSCE: CBM'S - FURTHER DISCUSSION WITH SOVIETS ON
"VOLUNTARY BASIS"

REF: GENEVA 2527

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. IN CONVERSATION WITH US ON APRIL 16, SOVIET AMBASSADOR MENDELEVITCH CONFIRMED THAT SOVIETS ARE PREPARED TO ACCEPT APPLICATION OF MANEUVERS CBM TO ALL OF EUROPE MINUS ZONES OF EUROPEAN USSR AND TURKEY, AND WOULD HINT AT THIS TO FRG, UK AND FRANCE, IN EXPECTATION THAT U.S. WOULD WORK IN PARALLEL TO GAIN ALLIED AGREEMENT ON "VOLUNTARY BASIS." WE OBSERVED THAT CONCEPT OF VOLUNTARY BASIS PRESENTS FEW DIFFICULTIES, BUT THERE ARE RESERVATIONS ABOUT USING THESE WORDS IN TEXT. MENDELEVITCH SAID HIS INSTRUCTIONS WERE FIRM ON USING WORDS THEMSELVES, BUT SOVIETS WOULD NOT BE DISMAYED IF ALTERNATIVE FORMULATIONS WERE OFFERED. HE URGED CONCURRENT DRAFTING ON "VOLUNTARY BASIS," ADDRESSEES OF NOTIFICATION, AND AREA OF APPLICATION, AFTER WHICH SUBCOMMITTEE COULD TURN TO NUMERICAL PARAMETERS. IN DISCUSSION OF NUMBERS,

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SOVIETS WOULD SHOW FLEXIBILITY ON THRESHOLD IF ALLIES

REDUCED DEMANDS ON WIDTH OF BORDER STRIP FOR APPLICATION OF MANEUVERS CBM IN USSR. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING UP ON APRIL 11 DISCUSSION BETWEEN SOVIET AND U.S. DELOFFS (REFTEL), SOVIET AMBASSADOR MENDELEVITCH TOLD US ON APRIL 16 THAT SOVIETS COULD NOW STATE TO U.S. THAT THEY ARE PREPARED TO ACCEPT APPLICATION OF MANEUVER CBM IN ALL OF EUROPE, WITH SPECIFIC EXCEPTIONS FOR PORTIONS OF USSR AND TURKEY. HOWEVER, MENDELEVITCH EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT ALLIES WOULD MERELY "SWALLOW" THIS CONCESSION, AS HE MAINTAINED THEY HAD DONE WITH SOVIET CONCESSION IN MARCH ON DDRESSEES, AND THAT THERE WOULD STILL BE NO PROGRESS ON "VOLUNTARY BASIS." AS RESULT, SOVIETS WOULD TAKE U.S. ADVICE, AND WOULD CONSULT UK, FRG AND FRANCE, BUT WOULD GO NO FURTHER THAN TO HINT AT CONCESSIONS ON AREA IN THESE CONSULTATIONS.

3. MENDELEVITCH SAID THAT HE BELIEVED U.S. WAS PLAYING A HELPFUL ROLE IN CURRENT SITUATION, BUT COMPLAINED ABOUT TACTICS PURSUED IN INFORMAL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING ON APRIL 15 BY CERTAIN ALLIES OF U.S. (UK AND NETHERLANDS), WHO HAD "BLOCKED" TABLING OF A TEXT ON "VOLUNTARY BASIS." (IN FACT, ALLIES MERELY RESISTED INTRODUCTION OF TEXT BY AUSTRIAN CHAIRMAN OF MEETING, SINCE CHAIRMAN'S SPONSORSHIP WOULD HAVE GIVEN TEXT MORE AUTHORITATIVE STATUS THAN IF SOVIETS OR ANOTHER MEMBER OF COMMITTEE HAD FLOATED IT.) MENDELEVITCH EXPRESSED EXPECTATION THAT U.S. AND SOVIETS COULD NOW WORK "IN PARALLEL" ON "VOLUNTARY BASIS," AND THAT TEXT OF MINI-PREAMBLE FOR MANEUVERS MEASURE COULD SOON BEGIN TO TAKE SHAPE, EVEN IF THERE WERE "ONE OF TWO OR THREE FORMS."

4. WE REPLIED THAT US AND ALLIES DID NOT HAVE MAJOR DIFFICULTIES WITH CONCEPT REPEAT CONCEPT OF VOLUNTARY BASIS, AND HAD IN FACT AGREED LAST WEEK TO DEAL WITH THIS CONCEPT. HOWEVER, SOVIETS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT THERE WERE SOME RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE WORDS THEMSELVES: -- FROM A LEGAL STANDPOINT, PUTTING CBM'S ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS WOULD APPEAR TO MAKE OTHER CSCE RESOLUTIONS MORE SECRET

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CONTRACTUAL THAN OTHERWISE.

-- FROM A PUBLIC AFFAIRS STANDPOINT, IT WOULD BE HARD TO EXPLAIN A VOLUNTARY BASIS AS ANYTHING OTHER THAN A DISCRETIONARY OR OPTIONAL BASIS.

-- FROM A SUBSTANTIVE STANDPOINT, THE WORDS WOULD APPEAR TO IMPLY THAT THE SOVIETS ARE GOING BACK ON THEIR EARLIER

AGREEMENT TO ACCEPT A FIRM COMMITMENT TO NOTIFY CERTAIN
MANEUVERS WITH FAIRLY RESTRICTIVE PARAMETERS.

WE ASKED IF SOVIETS WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER
OTHER FORMULATIONS.

5. RESPONDING TO THESE POINTS, MENDELEVITCH CONTENDED
THAT CBM'S WERE ONLY MILITARY MATTER BEFORE CONFERENCE
AND TERMS USED TO DESCRIBE THEM SHOULD NOT BE SEEN AS
PRECEDENTS FOR OTHER RESOLUTIONS; THAT SOVIETS WERE
PREPARED TO ACKNOWLEDGE POLITICAL AND MORAL RESPONSIBIL-
ITY FOR IMPLEMENTING MANEUVERS CBM, EVEN IF MEASURE
WERE CHARACTERIZED AS VOLUNTARY; AND THAT SOVIETS WERE
NOT WITHDRAWING THEIR OFFER OF A FIRMER COMMITMENT TO
MEASURE IF OTHERS ACCEPTED THEIR STANDARD POSITION ON PARAMETERS.
MENDELEVITCH SAID DELEGATION HAD FIRM INSTRUCTIONS THAT
WORDS "ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS" SHOULD APPEAR IN MANEUVERS
TEXT. HOWEVER, HE REPEATED THAT SOVIETS WOULD NOT BE
DISMAYED IF OTHERS WISHED TO SUGGEST ALTERNATIVE FORMU-
LATIONS.

6. ASSUMING ALLIES WOULD NOT RAISE FURTHER OBJECTIONS
TO MORE SPECIFIC DRAFTING WORK, MENDELEVITCH PROJECTED
FOR SHORT TERM THAT PORTIONS OF MANEUVERS TEXT DEALING
WITH VOLUNTARY BASIS, ADDRESSEES OF NOTIFICATION AND
APPLICATION TO ALL OF EUROPE COULD BE WORKED OUT AT
SAME TIME, AND PERHAPS MENTALLY REGISTERED CONCURRENTLY,
IF NECESSARY WITH ISSUES IN BRACKETS. DISCUSSION COULD
SOON TURN TO BAND OF TERRITORY TO BE COVERED IN USSR,
NUMERICAL PARAMETERS OF THRESHOLD, AND TIME SCALE.
FOR THIS DISCUSSION, MENDELEVITCH SAID HE HOPED ALLIES
WOULD BE ABLE TO TAKE FIRST STEP BY MODIFYING SOMEWHAT
THEIR POSITION ON WIDTH OF BAND OF SOVIET TERRITORY.

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SOVIETS WOULD RESPOND BY SHOWING FLEXIBILITY ON THRESHOLD.
WE REPLIED THAT MENDELEVITCH'S SHORT TERM PROJECTION
MIGHT PROVE FEASIBLE, BUT THAT DIFFICULTIES MIGHT STILL
LIE AHEAD IF SOVIETS WERE UNABLE TO SHOW MEANINGFUL
FLEXIBILITY ON NUMERICAL PARAMETERS. DALE

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECDEF.

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, MILITARY POLICIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975GENEVA02661
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750134-0982
From: GENEVA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750443/aaaabnnb.tel
Line Count: 161
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 75 GENEVA 2527
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17 JUN 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <18 JUN 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CSCE: CBM'S - FURTHER DISCUSSION WITH SOVIETS ON "VOLUNTARY BASIS"
TAGS: PARM, PFOR, XG, US, UR, CSCE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006